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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the differences in perception of job insecurity among secondary school teachers in Israel. Of the entire sample, 205 teachers (62 percent) were affiliated with public-sector unions. The rest of the samples--121 teachers (38 percent)--were affiliated with the private sector and were non-unionized. Using a multidimensional approach, unique job insecurity profiles of teachers in the public and private sectors were drawn, and the resulting effects on work attitudes were analyzed. In these two sectors, job security is commonly viewed differently. In the public sector, jobs are normally seen as secure, while the opposite is true for the private sector. Job insecurity was found to adversely affect various work attitudes in both sectors, especially the public ones. The two sectors are clarified, a conceptualization of job insecurity is presented, and, finally, a description of the research population (secondary school teachers in Israel) is given. The report concludes that job security is not merely a question of keeping one's job, but encompasses various features and aspects of the whole job. The results of this study might be relevant to organizations undergoing change, where change instills job insecurity, on one hand, but paradoxically also demands the best work force possible, on the other. Tables present outcomes of job security related surveys and tests. (JMD/Author)

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SECTORAL DIFFERENCES IN THE EXPERIENCE OF JOB INSECURITY: THE CASE OF ISRAELI SCHOOLTEACHERS

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SECTORAL DIFFERENCES IN THE EXPERIENCE OF JOB INSECURITY: THE CASE OF ISRAELI SCHOOLTEACHERS

abstract

The paper investigated job insecurity differences of secondary schoolteachers in Israel. Using a multi-dimensional approach, unique job insecurity profiles of teachers in the public and private sectors were drawn. Job insecurity was found to adversely affect various work attitudes in both sectors, especially the public one.

Keywords: Job insecurity, Public sector, Private sector

SECTORAL DIFFERENCES IN THE EXPERIENCE OF JOB INSECURITY: THE CASE OF ISRAELI SCHOOLTEACHERS

The issue of job insecurity (JI) among workers is gaining importance as more organizational and environmental changes -- such as manufacturing transplants, decreased governmental regulations, and organizational downsizing -- are taking place. These changes have the potential of reducing the number and nature of jobs in public and private organizations alike. Yet JI is interpreted differently in each of the two main sectors: while jobs of public-sector employees are usually perceived as relatively secure, jobs of private-sector employees are perceived as relatively insecure (Baldwin, 1987).

JI is a more complex notion than merely keeping or losing one's job. Recent studies show repeatedly that it is a multi-dimensional concept, encompassing various work aspects (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996). However, how far the dimensions of JI differ for employees in public and private sectors is not yet clear. The purpose of this study is to investigate and compare the experience of JI for employees in each sector. We examine perceived JI in both sectors, and analyze its differential effect on work attitudes. We will start with a clarification of sectoral differences, present our conceptualization of JI, and describe the research population – secondary schoolteachers in Israel.

Public vs. Private Sector

The differences and similarities between the public and private sectors have captured the attention of authors for decades. Public and private organizations have gradually come to face similar constraints and challenges, as governments deepen their involvement in businesses and increase deregulation measures. Such trends have led researchers to assume that these two types of organizations are on the way to convergence. Consequently, studies question the traditional distinction between private and public sectors and call for clearer definitions. Murray (1975), for example, argued that boundaries between public and private activity were blurring, and that comparisons were becoming invalid. A different approach was taken by Rainey, Backoff, and Levine (1976), who devised an elaborate list of organizational indicators, from which they concluded that comparison was appropriate, and that the two sectors were indeed different on several important issues, such as market exposure, complexity of objectives, and rigidity in performance (public organizations were less exposed, more complex, and more rigid). Other differential dimensions mentioned in studies are ownership, funding, mode of social control, and rigidity in performance (Fottler, 1981; Perry & Rainey, 1988).

Despite trends of convergence, the blurring of effects, and the complexity of defining dimensions, the traditional distinctions between public and private are still generally relevant for certain types of organizations. For example, a governmental agency such as the Ministry of Education is typically considered "public," while a privately-owned manufacturing plant is safely referred to as "private." Given this conventional distinction, structural factors are expected to be reflected in attitudinal differences among employees in the two sectors. Several comparative studies that

used the convenient distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic work factors point to a clear tendency for public-sector employees to place greater importance than private-sector employees upon intrinsic features. Cacioppe and Mock (1984), for example, reported that Australian public-sector employees were motivated mostly intrinsically by factors such as providing a service or product that helps other people. Private-sector employees, on the other hand, were mostly motivated by factors such as money. Similarly, Khojasteh (1993) and Rainey (1989) found that public-sector employees placed a lower value on financial rewards and a higher value on altruistic, service-oriented outcomes. Some indication exists, then, that private-sector employees tend to ascribe more importance to extrinsic characteristics, while public-sector employees tend to emphasize intrinsic ones. This distinction can be attributed to the fact that extrinsic rewards in the public sector are usually more centralized than in the private sector, are therefore taken for granted, and are perceived to only minimally motivate individual employees.

Job Insecurity in the Public and Private Sectors

Job insecurity is one of the extrinsic factors most often studied in the context of attitudinal differences between public and private sectors. It is widely accepted that public-sector employees enjoy a higher level of security (Baldwin, 1987), manifested in strong union representation and extensive grievance and appeal procedures. In fact, employers offer job security as a major employment incentive in the public sector (Rainey et al., 1976). Subjective reports of job security or its lack -- JI – may be expected to reflect this objective reality.

Results of studies on attitudinal differences regarding job security, however, are not so clear-cut. For instance, Cangemi, Davenport, Harryman, and Kowalski (1987) found that JI was a major concern of public-sector employees. Moreover, JI concerns of public-sector employees have been found to explain structured unionization (Fiorito, Stepina, & Bozeman, 1996) and a managerial tendency to focus on "red tape" (Rainey, Pandey, & Bozeman, 1995). On the other hand, other studies have reported that JI was more important for private-sector managers and employees than for public-sector ones (Khojasteh, 1993; Maidani, 1991).

This apparent inconsistency between findings might be related to the assumption stated above that job security is an inherent part of public-sector employment. The real problem, however, is that measurement methods tend to vary and the meanings of general measures such as "importance" (of job security, or any other work attitude for that matter) are not clear enough. Khojasteh (1993) has claimed that only a combination of the "importance" and "need satisfaction" dimensions of work values yields a true score. Moreover, measures of job security have often been based on one (e.g., Maidani, 1991) or a few (e.g., Rainey, 1983) items, with little reliability data. These items often allude to *only one* common aspect of JI: the likelihood of losing one's job. Another methodological obstacle is that the diversity of occupational, hierarchical, and role affiliations of the employees studied prevents conclusive comparisons. For example, the meaning of the same JI score could be totally different for rank-and-file employees as against managers, or for public-sector as against private-sector employees. Clearly, a reliable and valid measure of JI, embedded in theoretical conceptualization, is needed. Also needed is a study focused on a single occupational group that can represent the public and the private sectors. These two issues -- the need for a theoretically-based measure of JI, and the need for comparable

samples, drawn from the same occupational group or industry, will be addressed in the next two sections.

Conceptualization and Measurement of JI

Traditionally, researchers' conceptions of JI in the different sectors have stemmed from the general question of whether employees perceived the continuity of their jobs as guaranteed or not. A typical framing of a questionnaire item reflecting this JI perception was "I feel my work is an integral part of the organization's efforts" (Cacioppe & Mock, 1984), or "To what extent do you believe that more layoffs in the organization are likely to occur in the near future?" (Brockner, Grover, Reed, & DeWitt, 1992). These items represented a *uni-dimensional* view of JI, and were often included in "broader" work-related concepts, such as job satisfaction (Khojasteh, 1993) or work strains (Caplan, Cobb, Van Harrison & Pinneau, 1975). The uni-dimensional view has been criticized by several authors (Borg & Elizur, 1992; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Lahey, 1984) as a narrow approach that ignores the richness and multiple meanings embedded in the concept of JI.

These concerns were addressed by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt's (1984) alternative approach to JI. They designed a model in which JI was viewed as a subjective response to the objective threat of job loss. Whether this objective threat was transmitted through explicit or latent organizational messages, or through rumors, employees' response encompassed various aspects of loss. This response is *multi-dimensional*, composed of a general anxiety about keeping one's job and concerns about losing particular work features. The work features included both extrinsic factors such as pay, location, and physical demands, and intrinsic ones such as autonomy, recognition, and making a significant impact. This model was construct validated by Ashford, Lee, and Bobko (1989) and content validated by Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans, and Van Vuuren (1991, p. 72) in a multi-cultural study.

The multi-dimensional framework of this model enables a finer comparison between experiences of JI in public and private sectors. As the employment of public-sector employees is protected by collective agreements, it is expected that JI, if it exists, might carry different meanings for them than for private-sector employees. For example, while JI of private-sector employees might be related to the actual loss of one's job, JI of public-sector employees might be related to concerns about specific features of their job, such as involuntary transfers that involve losing one's work team and some work conditions.

Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) predicted that JI would have an adverse effect on employees' attitudes and work behaviors. Specifically, they argued that JI led to deteriorating organizational effectiveness because of decreased productivity and adaptability and increased turnover of insecure employees. These predictions were validated by Ashford et al. (1989), who reported that JI negatively affected job commitment, trust in organization, and job satisfaction, and positively enhanced the tendency to quit. Similar results, linking JI with adverse organizational attitudes and behaviors, were reported by Loseby (1992) in regard to organizational loyalty, by Kuhnert and Vance (1992) and Hallier and Lyon (1996) in regard to organizational commitment, and by Davy, Kinicki, and Scheck (1997) in regard to commitment, satisfaction, and withdrawal cognitions.

Findings on the link between JI and performance were somewhat inconclusive, and tended to depend on the performance measure used and on psychological interveners. For example, while Ashford et al. (1989) did not find a significant

association between JI and performance when measured by supervisory evaluations. Loseby reported on partial association between JI and performance when measured by sales-per-employee. The link between JI and work effort has been explained by psychological factors such as self-esteem and equity perception, introduced by Brockner (1988). In another study, Brockner et al. (1992) suggested that an inverted U relationship existed between JI and work effort, explained by threat level and control level.

To summarize, JI seems to generally have a clearly negative effect on work attitudes, and to have a somewhat negative effect on work performance. These assertions are applied next to the population of Israeli schoolteachers.

Israeli School Teachers as a Case in Point

Both the public/private distinction and the multidimensional conception of JI as outlined above can be readily applied to the population of Israeli schoolteachers at the high-school level. This occupational group can be found in Israel in both the public and the private sector. Moreover, sectoral differences in terms of teachers' employment reflect sectoral differences in Israel at large (Lachman, 1985; Mannheim, 1984; Solomon, 1986).

Teachers in public-sector organizations are mostly employed by their local municipalities, the "owners" of secondary-school systems, and are organized in powerful unions. Accordingly, the terms of teachers' employment, including salary and promotion, are specified in collective contracts which virtually guarantee job security. Once a teacher is tenured (after two years of probationary status), firing is possible only in very extreme cases and has to be authorized by the Minister of Education. The main reasons for dismissal are usually related to teachers' behavior, and seldom related to performance standards. Any dismissal procedure has to involve a bi-partisan committee, consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Education and the teachers' unions (Taub, 1997). Owing to these and other bureaucratic impediments, buffer strategies are often used, such as inter-school transfers and voluntary retirement plans, designed to circumvent the need to fire redundant teachers (and any other public-sector employees, for that matter).

By contrast, private-sector teachers are mostly employed by privately owned secondary-level educational institutions. An example of such an institution is an "external" school that absorbs high-school dropouts, mainly preparing them for national matriculation exams. Employment of teachers in these institutions is characterized by personal contracts, and terms of employment are determined by personal merit and labor-market demands. These contracts are periodically renewed with little or no provisions for job security. Some of these teachers are affiliated with teachers' trade unions, like public-sector teachers.

Beyond the ease of classifying Israeli secondary-school teachers into public and private sectors, there are two additional reasons for studying this population. First, irrespective of the different employment terms, the work of teachers in both sectors is largely homogeneous. That is, the centralized educational system in Israel dictates uniform educational programs and national performance requirements that are equally applied to all teachers in the mainstream educational systems, regardless of sector (Gaziel, 1994). This framework affords us the opportunity of studying employees in organizations within the same niche, in keeping with the recommendations of other authors who studied sectoral differences in work attitudes (Lachman, 1985; Lachman & Aranya, 1986).

Second, recent trends in teachers' employment have far-reaching implications for their image of job security, leading to increased relevancy of JI research for this particular occupational group. Although most teachers in Israel are employed by the government, a steadily growing number of them have recently come to be employed by private organizations. This shift has been caused by both privatization trends in education – in keeping with similar trends in other public institutions -- and the continuous weakening of workers' unions in Israel. For these reasons Israeli secondary schoolteachers seem to be an appropriate occupational group for testing the concept of JI.

However, in spite of the relevancy of the concept of JI in sectoral research, few studies have focused on teachers' JI, probably owing to the image of school teachers as mostly public-sector employees, on the one hand and the uni-dimensional view of JI on the other. One exception is a recent study that throws some light on the phenomenology and effects of JI on Israeli schoolteachers. Rosenblatt and Ruvio (1996) compared four groups whose job security status was determined a priori by their union membership and social affiliation (kibbutz members, teachers hired by kibbutzim, city teachers, and personal-contract teachers) in terms of their JI experience and its effect on work attitudes. Results indicated that even teachers assumed to be the most secure (kibbutz members) experienced some degree of JI, and that JI consistently had a negative effect on work attitudes.

Continuing this line of inquiry, the present study focuses on differences between teachers in the public and private sectors. Using Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt's (1984) multidimensional conceptualization discussed above, it is hypothesized that public- and private-sector employees experience some kind of JI, but the level and nature of the JI experience is different in the two sectors, pending on their different environments. It is also hypothesized that in both sectors JI negatively affects some work attitudes (organizational commitment, job performance, perceived organizational support, tendency to quit, and resistance to change). These attitudes were selected by their relevancy to JI and by their applicability to the population studied. Specifically, we postulate the following:

Hypothesis 1: Private-sector teachers experience a higher JI level than public-sector teachers.

Hypothesis 2: JI of private-sector employees primarily consists of concern about losing the job entirely while JI of public-sector employees primarily consists of concern about losing specific job features.

Hypothesis 3: While private-sector employees are mostly concerned with losing extrinsic features of their jobs (e.g., pay, team members), public-sector employees are mostly concerned with losing intrinsic features of their jobs (e.g., responsibility, recognition).

Hypothesis 4: Regardless of sector, JI adversely affects work attitudes, resulting in

(4a) decreased organizational commitment
(4b) decreased perceived job performance
(4c) a perceived reduction in organizational support
(4d) increased tendency to quit
(4e) increased resistance to change.

(No sectoral differences in regard to JI effect on work attitudes are hypothesized for lack of supporting evidence.)

METHOD

Sample

The sample included 326 secondary-school teachers from the northern part of Israel. Data collection was conducted at teachers' workplaces, and produced a 73% response rate. About 70% of the teachers were female, the mean age was 39, approximately 90% were married, and they had an average of 16 years of teaching seniority and 11 years of current-school seniority. About 54% held an academic degree (for more details, see Appendix). These demographic characteristics are typical of the average secondary schoolteacher in this part of Israel (see also Rosenblatt & Somech, 1998).

Of the entire sample, 205 teachers (62%), all of whom were unionized, were affiliated with the public sector. This group was characterized by a relatively high proportion of women (83%), with a higher education (over 73% had academic degrees compared to 54% in the total sample). The public-sector teachers were similar to the total sample in their age, marital status, and seniority in teaching and in the current school. The rest of the sample -- 121 teachers (38%) -- were affiliated with the private sector and were non-unionized. This group was characterized by a relatively low proportion of women (48%) and a lower educational level (only 54% had academic degrees). These teachers were similar to the total sample in all other personal characteristics.

Study Measures

Independent Variable

JI. The JI scale is a modified version of Ashford et al.'s (1989) instrument, which operationalized Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt's (1984) conceptualization. The current version, adapted for Israeli teachers in an elaborate pre-test (see details in Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996) includes 26 items grouped in two dimensions:

(a) The Job Features sub-scale. This sub-scale consists of 21 items describing specific job features. The features included both extrinsic work factors such as pay raise, opportunities for promotion and geographic location, and intrinsic ones such as task variety, significance of job, and autonomy in work design.

(b) The Total Job sub-scale comprises 5 items describing the loss of various aspects of the job as a whole, such as layoffs, cut in work hours, and undesirable changes in work schedule.

Responses for each item were along a scale of 1-5, and referred to the item's *importance* to the respondent and to the *likelihood* that a negative (unwanted) change might take place in the future. The composite score of JI was determined by the following formula (Ashford et al., 1989; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984):

$$JI = \Sigma\,[\text{mean Job Feature score (importance x likelihood)} + \text{mean Total Job score (importance x likelihood)}]^{1}$$

The range of possible scores on each of the sub-scales was 1-25, and that of the composite JI score was 2-50. Reliability of the Job Features and the Total Job sub-scales was α=.89 and α=.75 respectively, and that of the composite scale was α=.90.

Dependent Variables

Organizational commitment. This 9-item scale was adopted from Mowday, Steers, and Porter's (1979) conceptualization and measurement. Ashford et al. (1989),

who used this scale in their study on JI, reported a reliability of α=.91. In the present study, scale reliability was α=.83.

Tendency to quit. This 5-item scale was adopted from Walsh, Ashford, and Hill (1985). It was also used by Ashford et al. (1989), who reported a reliability of α=.92. In the current study reliability was α=.85.

Resistance to change. This 7-item scale was adopted from Georgiades (1967), who used it for schoolteachers. Reliability in the present study was α=.73.

Perceived performance. This 4-item scale was adopted from Brokstein (1991), who used it in a study of Israeli schoolteachers, with a reported reliability of α=.78. Reliability in the current study was α=.72.

Perceived organizational support. This 17-item scale was adopted from Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986), who used it for schoolteachers, with a reported reliability of α=.91. Scale reliability in the present study was α=.80.

All the scales used in this study were 1-5 Likert scales, and all reliability measurements used alpha Cronbach.

In addition, demographic variables, including gender, age, marital status, seniority (at school and in teaching), and education (degree) were measured and their association with JI was analyzed.

RESULTS

Results are reported in terms of the experience of JI and its effects on work attitudes. Each of these topics is analyzed first in regard to the total sample and then in regard to sectoral differences.

The Experience of JI (Hypotheses 1,2,3)

Tables 1-3 feature various aspects of the JI experience for the total sample and for the specific sectors. Results of JI scores in the JI sub-scales as well as in the general JI measure are presented in Table 1. The effects of the demographic variables (gender, education, and seniority) are presented in Table 2. Results of the specific Job Features and Total Job items are presented in Table 3. All analyses used t-tests, ANOVA and MANOVA procedures.

Total sample. The average JI score for the whole study sample was 18.83 (9.21 for Job features and 9.62 for Total Job: see Table 1). Of the demographic variables measured, only gender was found to affect JI: Women were less insecure than men (means 18.24 and 20.18, respectively; $F = 6.17$, $p=.01$, see Table 2). Education and seniority had no effect on the experience of JI.

------- Tables 1 and 2 about here -------

An item-by-item analysis (Table 3) reveals that the highest item scores on the Job Features sub-scale were the financial ones: pay raise (mean 10.9) and maintaining pay level (mean 10.7). The lowest score on the Job Features sub-scale was physical demands of job (mean 7.1). The highest score on the Total Job sub-scale was undesirable changes in work schedule (mean 11.4), and the lowest score was involuntary early retirement (mean 7.8). Concern about layoffs was ranked only third out of the five items of this sub-scale. Israeli secondary schoolteachers, then, were mostly concerned about the financial aspects of their jobs and their work schedules, and less concerned about being laid off or forced into early retirement.

--------- Table 3 about here ----------

No interaction effects were found between gender or seniority and sector. Age, marital status and education were unrelated to JI.

Sectoral differences. A sectoral comparison (Table 1) indicated that JI of public-sector teachers was significantly lower than that of their private-sector counterparts, in both the composite score (t= -5.75, df=200, p=00), and the Total Job and Job Features sub-scales (t=-5.76, df=199, p=.00 and t=-3.61, df=227, p=.00, respectively; this result *supports Hypothesis 1*. However, the nature of the JI experience was found to be different between the sectors. Private-sector teachers had a higher mean score on the Total Job sub-scale than the Job Features sub-scale (11.50 and 10.01, respectively), while public-sector teachers showed the reverse pattern (means of 8.50 and 8.74, respectively). These findings suggest that private-sector teachers were more concerned about losing their jobs or aspects of the whole job, while public-sector teachers were more concerned about losing certain features of their jobs, but not their jobs as a whole. This result *supports Hypothesis 2*.

Considering the disproportion between the gender composition of each sector, and recognizing the fact that women were found significantly less insecure than men, the question is whether gender representation may account for the sectoral differences detected. A separate analysis of each gender group was performed, resulting in consistently and significantly higher JI scores for the private sector than for the public sector (F=24.4, p=.00 for female, and F=5.59, p=.02 for male: see Table 2). It is concluded that sectoral effects of JI are above and beyond gender effects.

A sectoral comparison of the specific JI factors in both sub-scales revealed different JI profiles for each sector (see Table 3). Significant differences were found between public- and private-sector teachers in 12 out of the 21 items in the Job Features sub-scale and in 4 out of the 5 items in the Total Job sub-scale. Among the items that discriminated significantly between the sectors, the two job features with the highest JI scores for public-sector teachers were autonomy in performing work (mean 9.8) and performing all aspects of work (mean 9.6). Task variety was high too, with a mean of 9.8, but it did not reach significance level. The two highest job features for private-sector teachers were maintaining pay level (mean 13.4) and pay raise (mean 13.2). These results point to a tendency of the public-sector teachers to be mostly concerned about intrinsic job features, and a tendency of private-sector teachers to be mainly concerned with financial (extrinsic) job features, a result which *supports Hypothesis 3*. Nonetheless, it should be kept in mind that intrinsic features also ranked high among the private-school teachers. In fact, their mean score for several such features -- including autonomy in performing work (the highest public-sector item), ability to evaluate one's own performance, and significance of job -- was significantly higher than that of public-sector teachers. However, their scores for extrinsic features were even higher.

In the Total Job sub-scale, the highest ranking scores for both sectors were related to undesirable changes in work schedule and cuts in work hours. In both these items, the scores of private-sector teachers were significantly higher than those of their public-sector counterparts. Note that concern about layoffs ranked only third and fourth by private- and public-sector teachers, respectively, and involuntary early retirement was the lowest-ranked factor in both sectors. Teachers were uniformly more concerned about the specifics of their working conditions than about leaving the job altogether.

JI Effects on Work Attitudes (Hypothesis 4)

Table 4 features regression analysis of the effect of JI on various work attitudes for the total sample as well as for the two sectors.

Total sample. To test the effect of JI on work attitudes, a series of regression analyses was performed separately for each dependent variable (Table 4). JI was found to affect a decrease in organizational commitment ($F=8.02$, $p=.00$), in perceived performance ($F=10.82$, $p=.00$), and in perceived organizational support ($F=8.07$, $p=.00$), and an increase in the tendency to quit ($F=50.02$, $p=.00$), a result that *supports Hypotheses 4a - 4d*. No significant effect was found in regard to resistance to change.

---------- Table 4 about here ----------

Sectoral differences. The effect of JI on work attitudes of public-sector teachers was similar to that of the whole sample (except in perceived performance, where the effect disappeared). In regard to private-sector teachers, JI only affected an increased tendency to quit. JI, then, primarily had an adverse effect on the attitudes of public-sector teachers and little effect on attitudes of private-sector teachers.

DISCUSSION

The results of the present study indicate that the experience and effect of JI can be characterized along sectoral lines. The following discussion will explain these results, focusing on two issues: (1) JI experience of secondary schoolteachers in the public and the private sectors, and (2) the effect of JI on work attitudes. The theoretical, methodological and administrative implications of the results will be discussed as well.

JI experience of secondary schoolteachers in the Public and the Private Sectors

Results showed that schoolteachers were concerned about their JI. The JI experience for the whole sample was mostly manifested in the financial features of the job. This emphasis is inconsistent with results of a host of studies showing that teachers tend to value intrinsic features over extrinsic ones (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Kushman, 1992; Lachman & Diamant, 1987). This inconsistency might be explained by the element of concern about loss which appear in the JI measure, but not in standard measures of work values. Apparently, teachers value intrinsic features of their work as long as their jobs are not at risk. It is possible that the threat of job (or job feature) loss transforms teachers' orientations from intrinsic to extrinsic. The differential impact of the framing effect has been also demonstrated by Kahneman and Tversky (1979) in regard to risk taking: they showed that people tend to react differently to information presented in terms of loss than to identical information presented in terms of gain. However, the relative level of JI was not high (18.83 in a range of 2-50). This finding may be related to the fact that respondents answered under stable conditions.

One of the intrinsic factors most highly ranked by all teachers, regardless of sector, was autonomy, in particular autonomy in performing work. This factor has been repeatedly reported by authors in the area of educational administration as highly important to the teaching profession (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Kushman, 1992; Reyes, 1990; Rosenholtz, 1989). Moreover, work autonomy has been detected as particularly important to the best and brightest employees at large (Rosenblatt & Sheaffer, 1997) and to teachers in particular (Hart, 1994). These studies suggest that

when qualified employees perceive their needs for autonomy as unfulfilled, they tend to consider leaving the organization.

Another highly ranked intrinsic factor was task variety. The importance of this factor has been strongly emphasized in recent works at both individual and organizational levels of analysis. From the individual perspective, the most prominent research direction in this respect focuses on job enrichment and job redesign. Hackman and Oldham's (1980) motivational model, for example, considers task variety as one of five core characteristics of work leading to improved motivation and performance. From an organizational perspective, authors have lately noted increasing organizational needs for worker flexibility. This trend has prompted research on functional flexibility, i.e., the development of a multi-skilled workforce that is easily movable from one task to another (Atkinson, 1987). A pilot study (Rosenblatt, 1997) applying the concept of task variety to schoolteachers investigated the feasibility of creating such a workforce in secondary schools. As learning environments change rapidly with the introduction of highly sophisticated technology and with new social approaches, teachers are required to develop and apply new combinations of skills. Teachers who feel deprived of the opportunity to develop such skills, namely to lose the opportunity for task variety, might perceive this as a form of JI.

Finally, except for gender and seniority, no significant relationship was found between JI and employees' demographic characteristics (age, marital status, and education). This is consistent with Hartley et al.'s (1991) conclusions that demographic variables are filtered through a process of cognitive appraisal. Only when employees feel that their age, education or other personal characteristics make them more vulnerable are these characteristics correlated with JI. Gender and seniority, then, were found to be sources of vulnerability among Israeli teachers.

As hypothesized, public-sector employees were overall less job insecure than private-sector ones. This difference is most likely related to the objective circumstances of these two sectors, as public-sector employees do enjoy a higher level of job security than private-sector workers. Our results showed that the JI experience of private-sector teachers consisted more of concern about losing the whole job than about losing specific job features. Conversely, the JI experience of public-sector teachers was mainly related to a concern about losing specific job features. Indeed, a study on the Israeli electronics industry (Rosenblatt & Mannheim, 1996a, 1996b) reported that public-sector enterprises used significantly more non-layoff cutback strategies than private-sector enterprises. Similarly, redundant public-sector teachers in Israel are often offered inter-school transfers and early retirement programs as alternatives to layoffs.

The tendency of public-sector employees to be relatively more concerned with intrinsic than extrinsic work factors corroborates results of previous studies on public-sector employees (Khojasteh, 1993; Rainey, 1989). It is possible that public-sector workers, whose jobs were relatively less threatened, could "afford" to concentrate on intrinsic job features and be less worried about financial ones, which are anyway "fixed" in collective agreements.

The Effect of JI on Work Attitudes

Results indicated that JI generally had an adverse effect on the work attitudes measured. Teachers who experienced JI consequently exhibited decreased organizational commitment, performance and organizational support, and an increased tendency to quit. These findings support Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt's (1984) JI model

and are consistent with other validation studies of this model (Ashford et al., 1989; Hartly et al. 1991).

This overall effect, however, disguises a richer texture. Sectoral analysis revealed distinct differences: while the impact of JI on public-sector employees was generally compatible with the effect detected on the whole sample, little impact was found on private-sector teachers (the exception being an increased tendency to quit). This low association between JI and work attitudes in the private sector can be explained, in part, by the nature of teaching jobs in that sector, where JI is usually a built-in work feature and working conditions are mostly determined by external factors, such as the labor market and the competitive advantage of educational expertise. Organizational dependencies (e.g., seniority rights, pension plans, layoff compensation) are sometimes low in the private sector, especially when there is little certainty as to the duration of employment. Therefore, it is not surprising that changes in the level of JI have little effect on general work attitudes, with the exception of the tendency to quit.

The effect of JI on perceived performance found in the total sample disappeared when the sub-samples were analyzed. This is in keeping with findings of a weak relationship between job security (and other extrinsic work factors) and performance among public-sector managers (Khojasteh, 1993; Rainey, 1983; Solomon, 1986). Apparently, in the case of the public sector, job security (as well as other working conditions) is tied to collective agreements and is not performance-based. Also, analyses made in our study were based on linear models; so the weak relationship between JI and performance, at least in the private sector, may be an indication of alternative relationship patterns, such as Brockner et al.'s (1992) inverted-U model between JI and work effort. Similarly, Bargal, Back and Ariav (1992), who studied Israeli employees, argued that JI caused an increase in performance in the short run, but this relationship was reversed in the long term. More rigorous study of the effect of JI on teachers' performance is needed, comparing these rival models.

Implications of the Study

Theoretical implications. Results obtained in this study have implications for a number of theoretical conceptualizations. First, our findings contribute to the scholarly debate on sectoral differences, particularly in regard to differences in JI. While most previous research identified differences in the *level* of JI, the focus of the present study is on differences reflecting *nuances* of values and emphases. These findings are in line with Murray's (1975) conclusions that sectoral differences are tied to emerging cultural differences, reflected in the choice of tools and procedures rather than in technical differences

Secondly, the findings confirm the validity of Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt's (1984) approach to the study of JI. The research question here is not "Do these employees experience JI?" or "What is the level of JI?" but "What *kind* of JI ?" The assumption is that most employees experience some kind of JI, and that the view of "secure" vs. "insecure" jobs is invalid. This approach has been supported in previous research using other samples (Ashford et al., 1989).

Methodological implications. In this study, a multi-dimensional measure of JI was applied to a population of teachers, modified to include items unique to the work situation in schools (see also Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996). The inter-sample reliability of this measure was established in the present study using a comparative analysis of private and public sectors. The construct and predictive validity of the measure for various samples were established elsewhere (Ashford et al., 1989); in this study, the

predictive validity of the measure for a teachers' sample was supported for most of the variables measured. Further research is needed to test the measure's predictive ability in regard to teachers' *behaviors* that contribute to organizational effectiveness, such as real performance and absenteeism.

Administrative implications. Like managers in a wide spectrum of organizations, principals and educational administrators have to cope with an increasing rate of environmental changes that involve, among other things, reorganization, mergers, deregulation, privatization, downsizing, and cutbacks. These changes often pose a real threat to the continuity of employment and lead to subjective feelings of JI. Indeed, the study results show that a tendency to quit was the attitude most affected by JI. Despite some indications to the contrary (Kirschenbaum & Weisberg, 1990), the tendency to quit is presumed by most authors to be an indicator of voluntary turnover (e.g., Steele & Ovalle, 1984). Knowledge about the specific texture of the JI experience can direct administrators' efforts to lower JI feelings and subsequently reduce the threat of voluntary turnover. For example, administrators can ensure that teachers do not lose their sense of autonomy or the opportunity to use a variety of skills, or indeed any other highly ranked factor in their JI profile.

As is true of business managers, school administrators need to be aware of symptoms of JI and realign their human resource strategies accordingly. Strategy theorists increasingly emphasize the importance of the organization's human capital (e.g., Quinn, Anderson, & Finkelstein, 1996). In the teaching profession, human competencies are of particular importance, being the "movers and shakers" of future intellectual capital. The importance of maintaining a qualified teaching force, with positive work attitudes that lead to positive work outcomes, cannot be overstated.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The study shows that the public and private sector in Israel differ in the experience and effect of job insecurity, as exemplified in the case of schoolteachers. Using a multi-dimensional conceptualization and measurement of JI, it has been demonstrated that JI is not merely related to the question of keeping one's job, but is a broad-spectrum multi-dimensional concept, encompassing various job features and various aspects of the whole job. As such, even a relatively secure occupational group, such as schoolteachers, can exhibit some degree of JI, manifested in different ways. The experience of JI affects work-related attitudes (organizational commitment, perceived job performance, perceived organizational support, and increased tendency to quit), especially among public-sector teachers. Among private-sector teachers, only an increased tendency to quit was observed. The implications of these results might be relevant to organizations under change, where change instills job insecurity on one hand, but paradoxically also demands the best work force possible. Future studies are needed to test the study hypotheses on other occupational groups and other organizations.

NOTE

1. Another JI dimension in Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt's (1984) conceptualization - powerlessness - was not used in this study, since preliminary results indicated that it was statistically unrelated to the other components of the JI measure. Indeed, Hartley et al. (1991:34) suggested that powerlessness need not be included as a third component of the composite JI measure, since it was incorporated into the probability of loss in the "likelihood" dimension of both sub-scales. Subsequently this variable was removed from the final version of the measure.

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TABLE 1

Job Insecurity Scores of Public-Sector and Private-Sector Teachers

(t-tests)

	Total Sample (N=326)		*Public Sector (N=205)*		*Private Sector (N=121)*		*t (df, p)*
	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	
Job Insecurity scale	18.83	6.38	17.24	5.33	21.52	7.09	-5.75 (200, .00)
Job Features sub-scale	9.21	3.03	8.74	2.84	10.01	3.20	-3.61 (227, .00)
Total Job sub-scale	9.62	4.47	8.50	3.72	11.50	4.99	-5.76 (199, .00)

TABLE 2

The Effect of Demographic Variables on Job Insecurity Scores (ANOVA)

Variable	*Mean (sd)*	*F (p)*
Sex		
female	18.24 (6.24)	6.17 (.01)
male	20.18 (6.58)	
Education		
Prof. Degree	19.24 (5.99)	0.45 (.64)
B.A.	18.52 (6.62)	
M.A. and above	18.51 (5.87)	
Female		
public sector	17.09 (4.95)	24.40
(.00)		
private sector	21.63 (8.21)	
Male		
public sector	18.05 (7.01)	5.59 (.02)
private sector	21.33 (6.08)	

Seniority (Years) - no significant correlation was found between JI and seniority.

TABLE 3

Scores of Job Insecurity Sub-scales of Public-Sector and Private-Sector Teachers

	Total	*Public-sector*	*Private-sector*	*F (p)*
Job Features – sub-Scale				
1. Geographic location	8.8 (5.4)	8.2 (5.0)	9.9 (5.9)	7.46 (.01)
2. Promotion opportunities	8.6 (5.2)	8.2 (5.0)	9.5 (5.4)	5.29 (.02)
3. Maintain pay level	10.7 (5.9)	9.1 (4.8)	13.4 (6.7)	45.85 (.00)
4. Pay raise	10.9 (5.6)	9.5 (4.9)	13.2 (6.2)	34.89 (.00)
5. Status	9.7 (5.0)	8.9 (4.4)	11.1 (5.7)	16.11 (.00)
6. Autonomy in work design	9.8 (5.4)	9.3 (4.9)	10.5 (6.0)	3.81 (.05)
7. Autonomy in performing work	10.6 (5.7)	9.8 (5.5)	11.8 (6.0)	9.26 (.00)
8. Access to resources	9.7 (5.5)	9.3 (5.2)	10.4 (5.8)	n.s
9. Co-workers	8.7 (5.4)	8.2 (4.9)	9.6 (6.0)	5.28 (.02)
10. Performance feedback	9.6 (5.3)	9.5 (5.3)	9.8 (5.3)	n.s
11. Supervision	8.8 (5.1)	8.7 (5.1)	9.0 (5.2)	n.s
12. Physical demands	7.1 (5.0)	7.1 (5.0)	7.2 (5.2)	n.s
13. Interaction with public	7.8 (4.4)	7.8 (4.4)	7.9 (4.4)	n.s
14. Task variety	9.5 (5.0)	9.8 (5.3)	9.0 (4.5)	n.s
15. Complete entire work	9.9 (5.6)	9.6 (5.2)	10.6 (6.1)	n.s
16. Significant impact	9.6 (5.3)	9.1 (4.9)	10.3 (5.9)	4.28 (.04)
17. Self-recognition of performance	9.2 (5.3)	8.7 (4.8)	10.1 (6.1)	5.29 (.02)
18. Team participation	7.7 (5.3)	7.6 (5.3)	7.7 (5.3)	n.s
19. Recognition from principal	9.1 (5.7)	8.8 (5.3)	9.8 (6.2)	n.s
20. Training	9.4 (5.3)	8.9 (4.9)	10.1 (5.8)	4.11 (.04)
21. Special assignments	8.4 (5.4)	7.8 (4.9)	9.3 (6.0)	6.53 (.01)
Total Job – sub-Scale				
1. Cut in work hours	10.8 (6.7)	8.9 (5.5)	13.7 (7.5)	45.40 (.00)
2. Layoff	9.3 (6.8)	7.6 (4.9)	12.2 (8.3)	38.76 (.00)
3. Involuntary early retirement	7.8 (5.4)	7.1 (4.7)	8.9 (6.2)	8.05 (.00)
4. Undesirable changes in work schedule	11.4 (6.4)	10.4 (5.8)	13.1 (7.2)	13.91 (.00)
5. Lower level class	8.9 (6.1)	8.5 (5.9)	9.7 (6.3)	n.s

TABLE 4

Effects of Job Insecurity on Work Attitudes of Public-Sector and Private-Sector Schoolteachers

		Total Sample (N=326)	*Public Sector (N=205)*	*Private Sector (N=121)*
Organizational commitment	Beta	-.16	-.20	
	R^2	.02	.04	n.s.
	F (p)	8.02 (.00)	8.65 (.00)	
Tendency to quit	Beta	.37	.33	.31
	R^2	.13	.11	.10
	F (p)	50.02 (.00)	24.69 (.00)	12.81 (.00)
Resistance to change	Beta			
	R^2			n.s.
	F (p)	n.s	n.s.	
Perceived performance	Beta	-.18		
	R^2	.03	n.s.	n.s.
	F (p)	10.82 (.00)		
Perceived organizational support	Beta	-.16	-.13	
	R^2	.02	.02	
	F (p)	8.07 (.00)	3.31 (.05)	n.s.

APPENDIX

Demographic Characteristics of Public-Sector and Private-Sector Teachers (means, S.D., percentages)

	Public Sector (N=205)	*Private Sector (N=121)*	*Total Sample (N=326)*
Gender (% of Women)	83	48	70
Age	39.7 (8.4)	38.6 (9.4)	39.3 (8.8)
Married (%)	91	88	89
Seniority (years)			
- at School	11.1 (8.4)	10.1 (8.1)	10.7 (8.3)
- in Profession	15.7 (9.1)	15.8 (9.4)	15.7 (9.2)
Education (%)			
- Teachers' College Diploma	26.7	45.6	33.7
- Bachelor's degree	57.9	46.5	53.7
- Master's degree and above	15.4	7.9	12.6